

# Assist a Client with Applying for Benefits



The Job Aid explains how clients can use MI Bridges to submit an application for assistance. Partners and MDHHS staff can use the information in this Job Aid to assist clients with applying for benefits.

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## Important Information

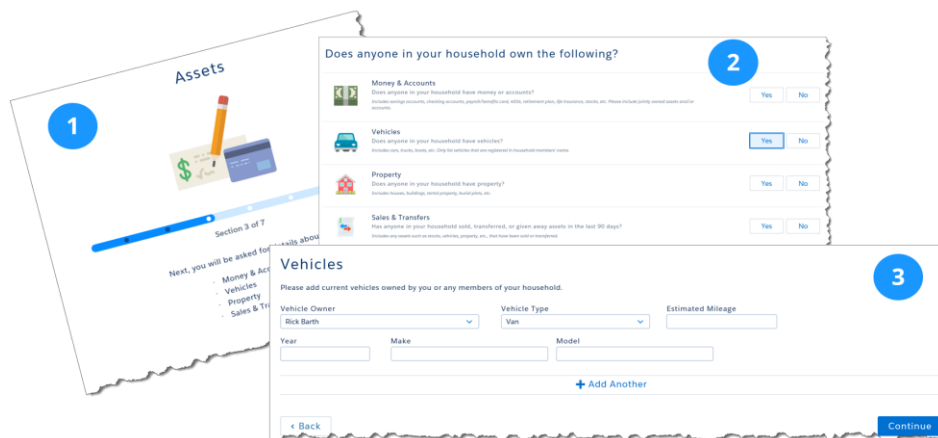
Clients can use MI Bridges to submit assistance applications. MI Bridges combines five MDHHS programs into one application:

- Healthcare Coverage
- Food Assistance Program (FAP)
- Cash Assistance (Family Independence Program (FIP) (This includes: Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Child Development and Care (CDC)
- State Emergency Relief (SER)

The MI Bridges assistance application varies in length, depending on what programs the client is applying for, as clients are only asked questions related to the programs that they are requesting. The application begins with a core application, followed by supplemental questions specific to only the programs the client is requesting. The core application asks questions that are common to all programs.

# Assist a Client with Applying for Benefits

## Tips for Navigating the Assistance Application



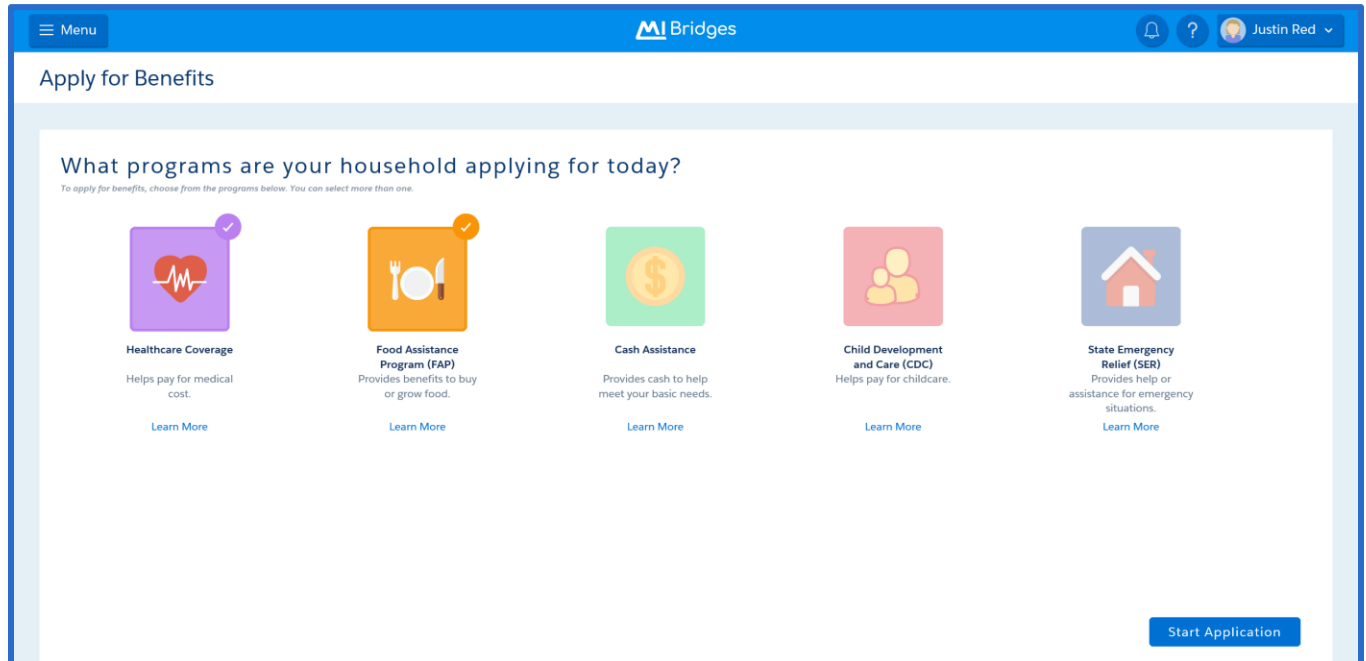
- Every application in MI Bridges follows the same structure of transition, question, and detail pages.
  1. Transition page: Each section of the application such as assets, income, expenses, etc. begins with a Transition page introducing that section.
  2. Question(s) page: The transition page for a section is followed by one or more Questions page. Answering 'Yes' on a questions page is how the clients identify their life circumstances that may impact program eligibility. Only questions that the client answers yes too will prompt follow-up Details page(s).
  3. Detail page(s): The Detail page(s) are pages which the client can use to provide additional details on a life circumstance.
- The application is available in English, Spanish, and Arabic.
- Throughout the application, a navigation pane displays on the left of the page. As the client progresses through the application this green bar will change to highlight the section the client is currently focusing on. Clients can also use this navigation pane to revisit sections of the application they have already completed. They cannot navigate to sections that have not been completed. **Important Note:** If a client revisits the Household section to add a household member, he/she must complete all sections after Household again.
- Clients can have one *In Progress* application at a time. A client can stop and return to complete the application at a later date. If a client has an *In Progress* application and clicks Apply for Benefits, the **Resume Previous Application?** pop-up displays. The client can choose to continue the *In Progress* application or begin a new application.



# Assist a Client with Applying for Benefits

## Launch a New Assistance Application

1. Click **Apply for Benefits** under *I want to...* The **What programs are your household applying for today?** page displays.
  - Clients can also click **[Menu]**, then *Apply for Benefits* to begin the process.



2. Click the *Programs* for which the client is interested applying for, then click **[Start Application]**. The **Let's get started** page displays.
  - A client can apply for as many programs as needed.
  - Clicking **[Learn More]** under a program to view program details.
  - **Important! The questions a client is asked when completing the application is based on the programs for which the client is applying.** Applicants cannot change the programs they are applying for during an application. If they need to change the programs, they must start a new application.



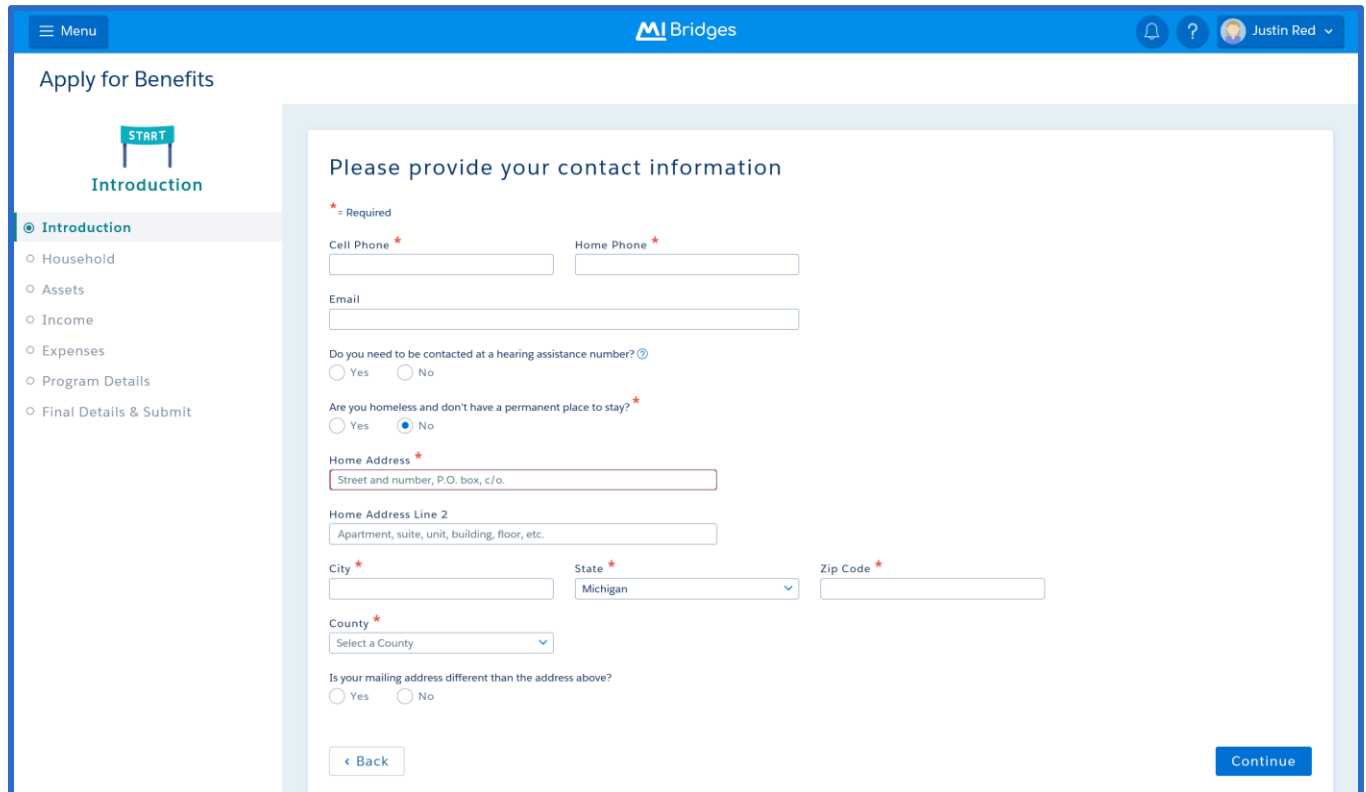
**Tip:** Each time the client selects **[Continue]**, the application is saved. As the client advances through the application, **Saved ✓** displays in the top of the page each time the application is saved. If the client chooses to leave and complete the application at a later date, they will be able to continue the application at the last saved page.

# Assist a Client with Applying for Benefits

## The Core Application

### Introduction

In the **Introduction** section the client records information such as language preferences, contact information, address, and if the client's food assistance request is expedited.



The screenshot shows the 'Apply for Benefits' interface in MI Bridges. The user is in the 'Introduction' section, which is highlighted in the left sidebar. The main form area is titled 'Please provide your contact information'. It includes a legend indicating that fields with a red asterisk (\*) are required. The form contains the following fields and questions:

- Cell Phone \*** and **Home Phone \***: Text input fields.
- Email**: Text input field.
- Do you need to be contacted at a hearing assistance number?**: Radio button options for Yes and No.
- Are you homeless and don't have a permanent place to stay?**: Radio button options for Yes and No (the 'No' option is selected).
- Home Address \***: Text input field with placeholder 'Street and number, P.O. box, c/o.'.
- Home Address Line 2**: Text input field with placeholder 'Apartment, suite, unit, building, floor, etc.'.
- City \***, **State \*** (dropdown menu showing 'Michigan'), and **Zip Code \***: Text input fields.
- County \***: Dropdown menu with 'Select a County'.
- Is your mailing address different than the address above?**: Radio button options for Yes and No.

At the bottom of the form, there are 'Back' and 'Continue' buttons. The 'Continue' button is highlighted in blue.

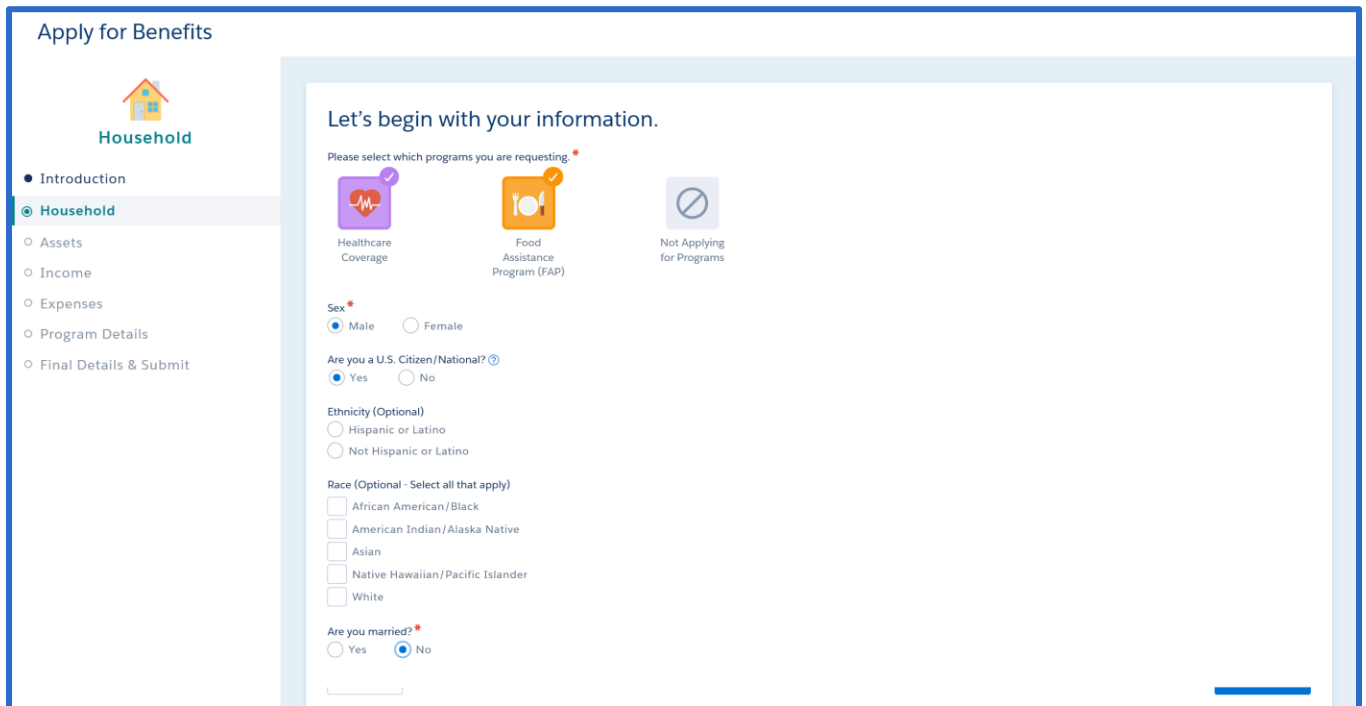
- Complete the *Introduction* section of the application, and click **[Continue]**. The **Household** transition page displays.
  - Fields with a red asterisk (\*) are required fields.
  - In MI Bridges some application fields are dynamic. For example, both the *Cell Phone* and *Home Phone* fields begin with a red asterisk (\*), however only one is required. Once one field is completed, the red asterisk next to the other field disappears.
  - In MI Bridges, answering **Yes** or **No** to some questions may prompt additional fields to display. For example, answering **No** to *Are you homeless and don't have a permanent place to stay?* Prompts fields to display so the client can record an address.

# Assist a Client with Applying for Benefits

## Household

In the **Household** section the client records information such as details about the individuals in the household, for example:

- The programs for which each person is applying
- American Indian background
- Information about household members filing a Federal Tax Return
- Living Arrangements
- Disability information
- College or vocational school enrollment
- Absent parent(s) for any children in the household
- Special circumstances such as seasonal farmworker, refugee status, etc.



4. Begin the *Household* section of the application by recording information about the Head of Household. This is the first person recorded on the application. Click **[Continue]**. The **Who's included in your household?** page displays.
  - Select the program(s) for which the person is applying by clicking on the program.
  - Record information such as sex, race, ethnicity, and marital status.

# Assist a Client with Applying for Benefits

## Who's included in your household?

List everyone who lives in your home, including yourself and anyone who is not there all the time.  
If applying for healthcare coverage, list everyone who will be included on your federal tax return this year  
(Note: you do not need to file taxes to receive assistance).

NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	
Justin Red	09/17/1985 (32)	<a href="#">Edit</a>

[+ Add New Member](#)

[< Back](#)
[Continue](#)

- After recording the Head of Household, the client can continue to add members of the household by selecting [+ Add New Member] on the **Who's included in your household?** page. Click **[Continue]** after adding the members of the household.
  - The age of the individual displays next to their name.
  - The individuals recorded in the Household section display later in the application when recording information such as assets, income, expenses, etc.

## Please answer the following questions about your household's situation.

Does anyone in your household have a disability or a physical/mental/emotional health condition? ⓘ	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">No</a>
Is anyone in your household currently enrolled in college/vocational school?	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">No</a>
Is anyone temporarily absent from the home (work, military, hospital, etc.)? ⓘ	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">No</a>
Has anyone in your household served in the military or armed services? ⓘ	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">No</a>
Was anyone in foster care when they turned 18? ⓘ	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">No</a>
Is anyone living in a facility or special living arrangement (now or within the past 3 months)? ⓘ	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">No</a>
Is anyone in your household going to an alcohol or drug treatment program?	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">No</a>

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[Continue](#)

- In the Household section, the client completes their first set of Questions pages. It is important to carefully review these pages, as this is how the client indicates their household circumstances. Clients will only view Details pages for the questions to which they answer Yes.



**Tip:** Some fields in MI Bridges are dynamic, including possible answer choices. For example, if a client selects **Yes** for *Is anyone in your household pregnant now or were they in the last 3 months?*, only female members of the household will display on the **Pregnancy Details** page.





7. Complete the *Household* section of the application, and click **[Continue]**. The **Assets** transition page displays.

## Assets

In the **Assets** section the client records information on any assets in the household.

- Note: If an application is for only Healthcare Coverage, the Assets section does not display.

Does anyone in your household own the following?

	<b>Money &amp; Accounts</b> Does anyone in your household have money or accounts? <small>Includes savings accounts, checking accounts, payroll/benefits card, 401k, retirement plan, life insurance, stocks, etc. Please include jointly owned assets and/or accounts.</small>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/>	<input type="button" value="No"/>
	<b>Vehicles</b> Does anyone in your household have vehicles? <small>Includes cars, trucks, boats, etc. Only list vehicles that are registered in household members' name.</small>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/>	<input type="button" value="No"/>
	<b>Property</b> Does anyone in your household have property? <small>Includes houses, buildings, rental property, burial plots, etc.</small>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/>	<input type="button" value="No"/>
	<b>Sales &amp; Transfers</b> Has anyone in your household sold, transferred, or given away assets in the last 90 days? <small>Includes any assets such as stocks, vehicles, property, etc., that have been sold or transferred.</small>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/>	<input type="button" value="No"/>

8. Select **Yes** or **No** on the Assets Questions page to indicate if any household members own assets. If a client selects Yes for a question, a details page displays so the client can record information on the asset.

# Assist a Client with Applying for Benefits

## Money & Accounts

Add any money and accounts that your household owns.

Account Owner <input type="text" value="Justin Red"/>	Account Type <input type="text" value="Payroll/Benefits Card"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> This is jointly owned.
Name of Bank/Institution <input type="text"/>	Amount (Dollars) <input type="text" value="\$ 500.00"/>	

[+ Add Another](#)

[< Back](#)

[Continue](#)

- On Details pages, clients can record as much information as possible. Click **[+ Add Another]** to add another asset in that category.
- Complete the **Assets** section of the application, and click **[Continue]**. The **Income** transition page displays.

## Income

In the **Income** section the client records information on any income in the household, including employment, self-employment, or other types of income received by the household such as pension/retirement, child support, etc.



**Tip:** Some Income questions in MI Bridges are dynamic. For example, if applications that include Healthcare Coverage ask if any household members income changes from month to month.

### What are some sources of income for your household?



#### Employment

Is anyone in your household employed now or in the last 30 days?  
This includes temporary and contract jobs.

[Yes](#)

[No](#)



#### Self-Employment

Is anyone in your household self-employed?  
This includes odd jobs.

[Yes](#)

[No](#)



#### Additional Income

Does anyone in your household have additional income?  
Includes unemployment, disability (SSI), alimony, workers' compensation, child support, social security (RSDI), pension/retirement, veterans benefits/military allotments, foster care/adoption subsidy, refugee resettlement/match grant, tribal income/benefits, short/long term disability, etc.

[Yes](#)

[No](#)



#### Change in Income

Has anyone in your household had a change in employment in the last 30 days?  
Includes being laid off or fired, quitting, going on strike, voluntarily reducing hours, etc.

[Yes](#)

[No](#)



#### Monthly Income Change

Does anyone's income change from month to month?

[Yes](#)

[No](#)

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[Continue](#)



## Assist a Client with Applying for Benefits

11. Complete the *Income* section of the application, and click **[Continue]**. The **Expenses** transition page displays.










**Tip:** In each sub-section of the page, there is helpful text to provide examples of the types of income for each category.

### Expenses

In the **Expenses** section the client records information on any expenses paid by the household, including housing related expenses, dependent care, medical expenses, court-ordered expenses, etc.

- Note: If an application is for only Child Development & Care, the Expenses section does not display.

#### Does your household have any of these expenses?

 <p><b>Housing</b> Does anyone in your household pay for housing expenses? <i>This includes rent, mortgage, property tax, etc.</i></p>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/> <input type="button" value="No"/>
 <p><b>Utilities</b> Does anyone in your household pay for utilities (not included in rent)? <i>Includes heating, air conditioning, electricity, water/sewer, trash, phone, etc.</i></p>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/> <input type="button" value="No"/>
 <p><b>Dependent Care</b> Does anyone in your household pay for dependent care expenses? <i>This includes childcare, elderly care, adult disabled care, etc.</i></p>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/> <input type="button" value="No"/>
 <p><b>Medical</b> Does anyone in your household pay for medical expenses? <i>Includes health insurance, prescriptions, hospital bills, dental bills, in-home care etc.</i></p>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/> <input type="button" value="No"/>
 <p><b>Court Ordered</b> Does anyone in your household pay for court ordered expenses? <i>This includes child support or alimony paid out.</i></p>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/> <input type="button" value="No"/>
 <p><b>Tax Deductible</b> Does anyone in your household pay for student loan interest or other tax deductible expenses? <i>Includes some deductions that can be reported on federal income tax returns such as contributions to individual retirement arrangements (IRAs), contributions to health savings accounts, certain tuition and fees, etc.</i></p>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/> <input type="button" value="No"/>
 <p><b>Air Conditioning</b> If utilities are included in your rent, does anyone in your household pay an extra fee for air conditioning?</p>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/> <input type="button" value="No"/>

12. Complete the *Expenses* section of the application, and click **[Continue]**. The **Program Details** transition page displays.

## Assist a Client with Applying for Benefits

### The Supplemental Application: Program Details

In the **Program Details** section the client answers information that is specific to the programs for which the client is applying. Similar to the paper 1171 Assistance Application, the length of the **Program Details** section varies based on the programs for which the client is applying.



Program Details






Section 6 of 7

Next, you will be asked for details specific to the programs you are applying for, including:

- Healthcare Coverage
- Food Assistance Program (FAP)

← Back
Continue

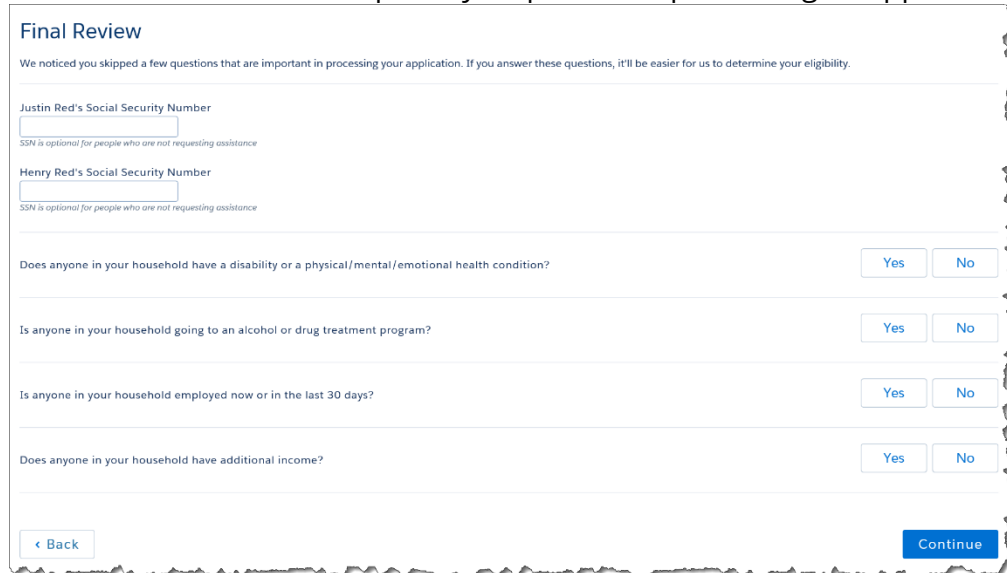
13. Complete the *Program Details* section of the application, and click **[Continue]**. The **Final Details** transition page displays.

# Assist a Client with Applying for Benefits

## Final Details & Submit

In the **Final Details** section the client answers information that is asked to all applications, such as information about previous benefits, voter registration, or if the client would like to name an authorized representative. This section also includes a page for clients to record any text they would like to share with MDHHS.

14. In this section the **Final Review** page may display. This page displays fields that the client did not answer. Completion of these fields is optional, but MDHHS caseworkers have identified this information as especially helpful when processing an application.



15. Complete the *Final Details* section of the application until reaching the **Your Signature** page. This is the final page the client must sign to submit the application. The client records their electronic signature and clicks **[Submit]**. The **Application Submitted** page displays.



**Tip:** If the client is applying for Healthcare Coverage, the Application **Submitted** page displays if the household is approved for Healthcare Coverage. This page may also display a pending message, or indicate results are not available.

16. **Congratulations, the Apply for Benefits process is complete.**



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q. What are the benefit programs included with the Online Application?**

A. The five benefits programs clients can use MI Bridges to apply for include:

- Healthcare Coverage
- Food Assistance Program (FAP)
- Cash Assistance (Family Independence Program (FIP) (This includes: Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Child Development and care (CDC)
- State Emergency Relief (SER)

### **Q. How many benefit programs can the client apply for?**

A. Clients can Apply for Benefits for as many or as few benefit programs as needed.

### **Q. Will the new 1171 Assistance Applications be printed in black & white or color in the MDHHS offices?**

A. The color differences are one of the features that help make the application easy to read. Applications available in MDHHS offices and on the MDHHS website will be in color.

### **Q. Can the client save an in progress application and finish it later?**

A. Yes, the application is saved each time the client clicks a **[Continue]** button. If the client logs out before submitting the application, after logging in again they will be prompted to submit or complete the in progress application. A client can only have one application with 'in progress' status at a time.